



ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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~ MEMORANDUM ~

TO: Island County Planning Commission

FROM: Meredith Penny, Long Range Planner

DATE: March 21, 2016

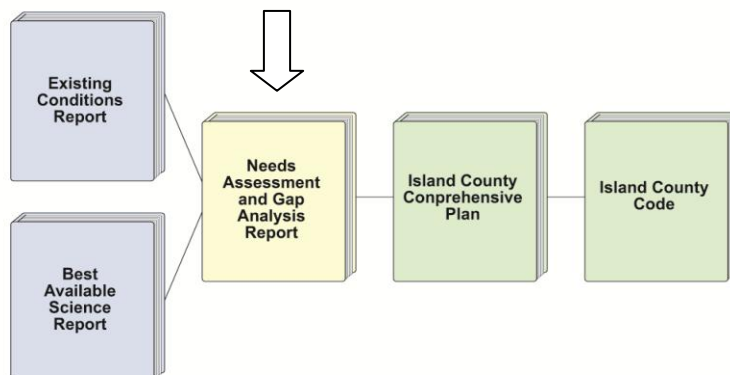
SUBJECT: Critical Areas – Draft Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis

Island County Planning Commission:

Background

The Department of Planning and Community Development is currently leading an effort to review, and if necessary, update the County's critical area regulations as a component of the periodic update of the Island County Comprehensive Plan. The Draft Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis (Enclosure A) is the third of the three reports that have been produced in support of this effort. Based upon best available science and changes in legal requirements, this report identifies recommended regulatory revisions and optional actions to consider. The findings presented in the Best Available Science and Existing Conditions Reports formed the basis for this work.

The following is a diagram that helps to illustrate the Critical Areas Ordinance Update process and how the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis folds in.



Please note: this document does not include comments made by the County's Technical Advisory Group (TAG); those comments will be collected and incorporated simultaneously with comments received from the Planning Commission.

The options and recommendations included are broad/high level, and will be advanced into more structured "policy/code packages" during the next task for those options the County would like to move forward during this periodic update. Additional items may be identified for consideration for additional research and incorporation on a future annual docket.

The recommended and optional revisions, symbolized as a check and star respectively, are arranged in order by topic/chapter, and are found in Appendix A of the report but are also included in this memo for ease of reference.



Recommended Revisions



Optional Policy Considerations

Wetland Rating, Regulations, and Monitoring (Chapter 2)



Consider specifically requiring the use of the federal manual for wetland delineation.



Consider requiring compensatory mitigation for temporary impacts to wetland functions that will last two or more years.



Consider prohibiting reduction of wetland buffers below 75 percent of the standard buffer width.



Consider alternative mitigation strategies with a focus on watershed scale planning and management.



Refine wetland monitoring program; appoint task force to address.

Surface Water Quality Impacts and Monitoring (Chapter 3)



Consider public education strategies that emphasize the importance of water quality and effective surface water management.



Although on-site infiltration is often the preferred approach for development, where warranted, further consider use of LID and green stormwater infrastructure approaches in specific watersheds.



Incorporate incentives into the adaptive management framework (ICC 17.02.040.L.6).

Groundwater Resources and Quality Protection (Chapter 4)



Available groundwater level trend data are often over 10 years old and are thus not necessarily indicative of recent trends. Areas could be identified where enhanced time-series groundwater level data could be useful.



Seawater intrusion monitoring is comprehensive, but could be improved by increasing the compliance of data submittal by public water systems and expanding measurement of groundwater elevations (or clarifying the significance of existing measurements) in selected areas.



Metering pumping from water-supply wells provides data from the larger water systems, but data are not reported from the smaller systems or domestic wells. Agricultural groundwater use estimates are relatively inaccurate. Improvements to the accuracy of this data could be explored.



Review all forms of proposed development for effects on water availability.

Public Safety and Property Risks from Geologic Hazards (Chapter 5)



In next SMP amendment or update, consider increasing setbacks and/or prohibit development in areas vulnerable to bluff retreat or shoreline retreat and landslides.



In next SMP amendment or update, consider expanding tsunami hazard protections.



Provide specific development standards for areas vulnerable to seismic events.



Provide clarity on the variable risk posed to areas above, below, and on unstable or potentially unstable slopes.



Use and/or adopt multiple sources of available maps and information regarding for landslides, soil liquefaction potential, and tsunami hazards as screening tools during permit review.



Use County's 2007 and 2014 LiDAR in refining hazard identification.



Consider notification requirements for geologically hazardous areas (i.e., property sales and/or title)



Clarify intent and purpose of geotechnical reports for steep/unstable slopes.

Discussion Item

Staff is seeking input on which of the above recommended and optional items to consider moving forward during this periodic update cycle.

Enclosure:

'A' – DRAFT CAO Update Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis, March 2016 (GMA No. 11853)